

## Message Text

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43

ACTION SS-30

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 2735

EXDIS

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TAGS: PINR, ASEC, MX

SUBJ: SITREP NO. 37. PATTERSON KIDNAPPING: MEDIA COVERAGE ON  
KIDNAPPING FOR MARCH 30 WAS AS FOLLOWS:

1. NEWSPAPERS GAVE LIMITED PLAY ON INSIDE PAGES TO PATTERSON'S  
KIDNAPPING AND SOME EVEN SUGGEST THAT IT MIGHT BE A HOAX.

2. EL HERALDO RAN STORY ON PAGE 11 WITH HEADLINE READING:  
"POLICE DOUBT VICE CONSUL WAS KIDNAPPED. PATHETIC CALL OF THE  
DIPLOMAT'S WIFE TO HIS KIDNAPPERS". THE STORY QUOTES PUBLIC  
PROSECUTOR (AGENTE DEL MINISTERIO PUBLICO FEDERAL) JOSE B.  
MITCHELL GONZALEZ AS SAYING, HE THINKS IT IS HIGHLY IMPROBABLE  
THAT THE KIDNAPPERS, PRESUMED TO BE MEXICANS, WOULD HAVE LET  
PATTERSON WRITE THE RANSOM LETTER SINCE HE COULD EASILY SLIP  
IN SOME CODE WORDS TO HIS CONSULATE. MITCHELL GONZALEZ ALSO SAID  
A WITNESS SAW PATTERSON AND ANOTHER MAN LEAVE THE CONSULATE  
VEHICLE (RANCH TYPE) VERY CALMLY ON MARCH 22, APPROXIMATELY  
TEN MINUTES AFTER THE VICE CONSUL LEFT THE CONSULATE.

3. EL UNIVERSAL RUNS THE STORY ON PAGE 14 UNDER HEADLINE SAYING:  
"DRAMATIC CALL OF JOHN PATTERSON'S WIFE". PHOTO OF CONSUL ELMER  
YELTON, ANN PATTERSON AND BOB MILTON. WITHOUT GIVING A SPECIFIC  
SOURCE THE FRANCE PRESS DISPATCH SAYS -A HIGH MEXICAN SOURCE'  
DOUBTS THAT PATTERSON WAS REALLY KIDNAPPED. THE SOURCE SAYS  
THAT WHEN QUESTIONED, ANN PATTERSON HAS INCURRED MANY CONTRA-  
DICTIONS REGARDING THE KIDNAPPING... "PATTERSON'S WIFE AT TIMES  
SHOWS TOTAL CONFIDENCE AS IF SHE KNEW HER HUSBAND WAS NOT IN  
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DANGER AND SOMETIMES SHE BEHAVES SPECTACULARLY....THEATRICALY,

ALMOST ON THE VERGE OF HYSTERIA".

4. EL SOL HAS THE STORY ON PAGE 8 WHICH INCLUDES A RUMOR THAT PATTERSON HAS ALREADY BEEN KILLED AND THAT THE POLICE NO LONGER EXPECT HIM TO BE ALIVE. THIS RUMOR, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY DENIED BY THE FEDERAL JUDICIAL POLICE, STORY SAYS.

5. ALL PAPERS AGREE THAT ABOUT 200 JUDICIAL POLICEMEN ARE COMBING THE HILLS AROUND HERMOSILLO LOOKING FOR THE VICE CONSUL. THEY ALSO TIE THE STORY TO POLICE ACTIVITY IN GUAYMAS TO CAPTURE GUERRILLAS INVOLVED IN A SHOOT-OUT ABOARD A TRAIN A FEW DAYS AGO. POLICE ARE SAID TO HAVE RETURNED FROM GUAYMAS WITH THREE YOUNG MEN "WHO HAD SUBVERSIVE BOOKS AND ARE BEING INVESTIGATED FOR ANY POSSIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH THE 23RD OF SEPTEMBER LEAGUE".

6. MRS. PATTERSON'S APPEAL VARIES FROM PAPER TO PAPER, BUT TRANSLATIONS ARE ESSENTIALLY CORRECT. THE APPEAL APPEARS IN ALL MORNING PAPERS. PAPERS ALSO REPORT THAT MRS. PATTERSON AND THE VICE CONSUL'S RELATIVES AND FRIENDS ARE TRYING TO RAISE THE RANSOM ASKED FOR HIS RELEASE.

7. NOVEDADES HAS THE STORY ON PAGE 13 AND VERY BRIEF BUT INCLUDES A ONE COLUMN PHOTO OF MRS. PATTERSON. HEADLINE READS: "CONSUL'S WIFE APPEALS TO KIDNAPPERS. ANN OFFERS TO DO ANYTHING TO GET JOHN'S RELEASE". THE STORY LIMITS ITSELF TO THE APPEAL WITH NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR SPECULATIONS.

8. EXCELSIOR DOES NOT RUN THE STORY AS SUCH BUT EDITORIALIZES ON THE KIDNAPPING" "THE KIDNAPPING OF THE AMERICAN VICE CONSUL IN SONORA, JOHN PATTERSON, IS THE LAST CHAPTER IN PROCESS OF DETERIORATION OF WORLDWIDE SCOPE...THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED NOT TO HAVE ANY DEALINGS WITH THE KIDNAPPERS AND THE AMERICAN AUTHORITIES TOO, HAVE NO INTENTION TO ESTABLISH NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE VICE CONSUL'S CAPTORS EITHER, WHICH MEANS THEY SHOULD NOT EXPECT POLITICAL, SOCIAL OR PUBLICITY GAINS SINCE THE GOVERNMENTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES WOULD THEN BE AT THE MERCY OF CONDITIONS IMPOSED BY CRIMINALS..." "THE PAYMENT OF ANY RANSOM WOULD BE SOMETHING STRICTLY PRIVATE AND WOULD NOT GIVE ANY BELLIGERANCE TO THOSE WHO RESORT TO ONE OF THE ACTS MORE LIKELY TO PROVOKE ANGUISH AND VITUPERATION BECAUSE IT FALLS ON CONFIDENTIAL

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THE INNOCENT WHOSE FATE DRAGS THEIR FAMILIES TO DESPAIR..."

9. COMMENT: EXCELSIOR EDITORIAL ESPECIALLY WELL-REASONED AND COMPREHENSIVE TREATMENT OF KIDNAPPING-TERRORISM ISSUE, PRESENTING BOTH GOM AND USG POSITIONS AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE EDITORIALIST. UNLIKE SOME ELEMENTS OF MEXICO CITY PRESS, EXCELSIOR IN THIS EDITORIAL HAS NOT CAST DOUBT ON THE BONA FIDES OF THE KIDNAPPING (I.E., SUGGESTED A HOAX.)

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